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SUBJECT: PRC SUPPORTS UNSC ACTION ON IRAN; DIFFERS ON SCOPE

REF: SECSTATE 188259

Classified By: Political External Unit Chief Edgard Kagan. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Given Iran's failure to cooperate with the IAEA and comply with UNSCR 1696, it is imperative that the UN Security Council reach agreement as soon as possible on a sanctions resolution based on the EU3 draft text, Poloff stressed to MFA IO UN Division Director Yang Tao when delivering refotel points on November 17.

¶2. (C) China and the United States face a common challenge in responding to the Iran nuclear issue, Yang said. China is not satisfied with Iran's behavior, as highlighted in IAEA Director General El Baradei's report. Iranian President Ahmadinejad's recent remarks were unhelpful. Yang stated that China supports UN Security Council action on the Iran nuclear issue and only differs with the United States on the details and scope of such action. China wants to curb the aspirations of countries seeking nuclear weapons and does not want another country with nuclear weapons. Forcing a vote on the draft EU3 text at this time will cause a split in the Security Council, Yang said, adding that China agrees Iran needs to be penalized for its behavior but the penalty should fit the crime. China seeks P-5 solidarity and will attempt to find a middle way between the EU3 and Russian drafts, Yang said.

Need to Live Up to Commitments

¶3. (C) Poloff stressed that Secretary Rice, FM Li and their P-5 plus one counterparts agreed that a sanctions resolution would be necessary should Iran not meet the August 31 deadline in UNSCR 1696. Iran flouted the deadline and continues uranium enrichment activities. Now is the time to act to live up to this commitment though strong measures in the Security Council, Poloff emphasized, underscoring that we look forward to PRC agreement on a sanctions resolution as soon as possible.

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